# Spring Turkey Hunter Questionnaire 2005

By Brian Dhuey

#### Abstract

Ninety-one (91.2%) percent of all spring turkey hunters that received a harvest permit hunted turkeys during the 2005 spring turkey season. The overall success rate for active hunters was 38.3%. The mean number of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 4.5 compared to a mean number of hens of 7.3. Just over 36% of the respondents rated their overall spring turkey hunt as "Very High" or "Fairly High", while 25% rated their spring hunt as "Fairly Low" or "Very Low". Forty-five percent (45.4%) of the respondents indicated that turkey numbers in their hunting zones remained about the same relative to 2004. Statewide, the overall satisfaction level with the spring turkey hunt was 7.2 on a scale of 1 (worst) to 10 (best).

### **Methods**

A sample of hunter names and addresses were randomly drawn from the current spring turkey hunter permit file. A survey was mailed to ~10,000 spring turkey hunters after the completion of the spring turkey season. The questionnaire was mailed in proportion to the number of permits distributed in each zone. The questionnaire asked each hunter specific questions about their spring turkey hunting experience (Figure 1). A second mailing was made to 5,000 of the non-respondents. Data from all returned questionnaires were summarized using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

The current spring turkey hunting zones were then grouped into regional areas (Figure 2). The regions were created from zones that had similar turkey populations, hunter densities, and habitat. These regions were created so that responses could be pooled to increase the response rates in some of the less hunted zones.

#### Results

A total of 4,609 spring turkey hunter surveys were returned. After duplicates were removed, the resulting response rate was 45.9%. The proportion of respondents who applied with landowner preference for this spring's turkey hunt permit was 17.7% (Table 1, Question 1). Statewide, 49.9% of the respondents have 0-5 years of spring turkey hunting experience and only 7.1% have 16+ years of experience (Table 1, Question 2).

Statewide, 91.2% of the respondents hunted turkeys this spring. Of those who did not hunt, 36.4% bought a 2005 wild turkey stamp (Table 1, Question 3). The success rate for active hunters who received a harvest permit was 38.3%. This success rate may be high because hunters who were successful may have been more likely to return the survey than hunters who were unsuccessful. The spring turkey harvest registration data success rate (23.8%) is uncorrected for nonhunters and is probably a low estimate. Twenty-six percent of the respondents had attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the WDNR or the National Wild Turkey Federation (Table 1, Question 5).

All surveyed hunters were asked who introduced them to turkey hunting, 39.6% introduced themselves, while 33.7% were introduced by a friend (Table 1, Question 6). Surveyed hunters

were asked how difficult it was to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2005, and 87.4% of the respondents said it was 'very easy' or 'somewhat easy' (Table 1, Question 7). Spring turkey hunters were also asked to report the days on which they hunted. Hunting pressure was relatively constant with more pressure on Saturday followed by Friday and opening day of the hunting season (Table 1, Question 8). Hunters averaged 3.3 days a field perusing turkeys.

Statewide, the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes seen by hunters was 4.5; the mean # of Gobblers/Jakes heard by hunters was 7.2; the mean # of Hens seen was 7.3, and the mean # of Hens heard was 5.0 (Table 1, Question 9). Most respondents that had a shot at a turkey (60.6%) did not shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity; 49.2% reported waiting for a better shot, or for an adult gobbler (Table 1, Question 10). Surveyed hunters were asked if they hit any turkeys that they were unable to retrieve; 5.4% were unable to find their bird, 163 hunters reported hitting one turkey, and 5 hunters reported hitting 2 or more turkeys (Table 1, Question 11). Of the respondents that harvested a turkey, 36.1% with one tag harvested one turkey; 36.4% with two tags harvested one turkey, and 10.9% harvested two turkeys. Most successful hunters (82.2%) harvested their turkeys between sunrise and noon (Table 1, Question 12).

Most respondents (91.0%) hunted on private land or a combination of private and public lands (Table 1, Question 13). Under one-quarter (20.9%) responded to "other hunters kept me from hunting where I wanted to" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' Similarly, 16.8% of respondents answered "there was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted" with 'definitely yes,' or 'somewhat.' However, only 12.5% of the respondents indicated that other hunters interfered with their chance to bag a bird (Table 1, Question 14).

One hundred and twenty-six respondents reported knowing of 1 or more turkeys that were tagged but not registered. One hundred and twelve respondents reported knowing of 1 or more turkeys that were neither tagged nor registered (Table 1, Question 15).

Overall, 36.5% of respondents rated their spring turkey hunting experience as 'very high' or 'fairly high,' while 25.2% rated their hunt as 'fairly low' or 'very low' (Table 1, Question 16). The most important factor that influenced respondents' perceptions of a quality hunt was "seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling". The least important factor was "killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)" (Table 1, Question 17).

Most respondents (45.4%) feel that turkey numbers in the zones they hunted in the spring stayed the same relative to the year before (Table 1, Question 18). Seventy-two percent (72.0%) of the respondents would like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) they hunted to stay the same or decrease (Table 1, Question 19).

Respondents were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst; statewide, they ranked their overall satisfaction level at 7.2 (Table 1, Question 20).

**Table 1.** Responses to the 2005 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.

C= Central Region EC =East Central Region NE = North Eastern Region NW= North Western Region SE =South Eastern Region SW =South Western Region

1. Did you apply with landowner preference for this spring's turkey permit? (Percent)

-	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	14.5	15.0	16.9	24.1	17.5	16.4	17.7
No	85.5	85.0	83.1	75.9	82.5	83.6	82.3

2. How many years of spring turkey hunting experience do you have? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
0-5	53.0	45.9	62.6	55.5	50.7	35.7	49.9
6-10	31.3	34.2	28.0	27.7	30.4	28.5	29.5
11-15	11.4	14.7	6.5	10.8	13.1	21.7	13.5
16+	4.4	5.2	2.8	6.0	5.8	14.0	7.1

3. Did you hunt turkeys this spring? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	90.6	88.8	91.5	92.9	89.1	92.0	91.2
No	9.5	11.2	8.5	7.1	10.9	8.0	8.8

If no, did you buy a 2005 wild turkey stamp? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	43.2	29.3	34.9	34.0	46.8	34.7	36.4
No	56.8	70.7	65.2	66.0	53.2	65.3	63.6

- 4. Please list the zone and time period your carcass tag(s) were valid for this spring? (Percent)
- 5. Have you ever attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored by the Wisconsin DNR or the National Wild Turkey Federation? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	24.3	25.8	25.2	20.4	30.1	31.0	26.3
No	75.8	74.2	74.6	79.6	69.9	69.0	73.7

# 6. Who introduced you to turkey hunting? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Parent	12.5	11.7	11.9	11.9	11.7	13.3	12.2
Friend	32.0	34.8	33.4	34.4	32.7	34.0	33.7
Sibling	7.2	6.1	7.1	8.6	7.0	6.9	7.2
Self	41.8	38.7	41.1	37.5	43.7	37.6	39.6
Other	6.5	8.7	6.5	7.6	4.9	8.2	7.2

Other people mentioned were: Spouse, Children, Uncle, Grandparent

# 7. How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2005? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Very Easy	50.6	59.6	55.0	58.1	49.4	59.6	56.2
Somewhat Easy	36.3	26.7	32.5	30.9	34.2	29.1	31.2
Somewhat Difficult	11.0	13.0	11.0	10.1	14.5	9.7	11.2
Very Difficult	2.1	0.7	1.5	0.9	1.8	1.6	1.4

# 8. Please check all the days that you hunted for turkeys this spring. (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Wednesday	19.1	20.6	20.9	21.4	21.7	19.7	20.5
Thursday	19.4	19.5	19.4	19.1	18.4	19.7	19.3
Friday	22.5	21.3	21.9	21.2	20.9	21.8	21.6
Saturday	22.5	22.5	22.5	21.7	22.0	22.9	22.4
Sunday	16.5	16.2	15.3	16.6	17.0	15.9	16.1

#### Mean Days Spent Hunting

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Days	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.3	3.3

## 9. Please fill in the number of turkeys you saw or heard while actively hunting. (Mean)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Gobblers/Jakes heard	6.6	6.4	6.6	8.3	6.5	7.8	7.2
Gobblers/Jakes seen	3.9	4.1	4.4	5.5	4.9	4.3	4.5
Hens Heard	5.0	4.3	6.0	5.2	3.8	4.7	5.0
Hens Seen	6.4	6.6	8.0	7.9	7.9	6.6	7.3

# 10. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	38.5	34.8	35.6	39.3	41.4	44.8	39.4
No	61.5	65.2	64.4	60.7	58.6	55.2	60.6

# If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason. (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Waiting for a better shot	50.5	53.9	48.5	48.0	49.4	47.1	49.2
Waiting for an adult gobbler	28.9	30.5	29.1	28.5	28.2	34.0	30.1
Waiting for a larger bird	7.8	5.8	10.1	10.7	10.6	8.5	9.1
Wanted to hunt longer	6.9	4.6	6.5	7.7	6.7	4.6	6.1
Other	6.0	5.2	5.7	5.1	5.1	5.8	5.5

# 11. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Yes	6.1	3.3	4.8	6.6	5.5	5.8	5.4
No	93.9	96.7	95.2	93.4	94.6	94.2	94.6

# If yes, how many? (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	19	14	28	39	23	40	163
2	1	0	0	1	0	1	3
>2	0	0	2	0	0	0	2

# 12. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring? (Percent)

	Central	Region			<b>East Cent</b>	ral Region	
Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds	Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds
1	66.9	33.1	n/a	1	68.2	31.8	n/a
2	56.3	35.6	8.1	2	57.5	31.0	11.5
	Northeaste	ern Regior	1		Northwest	ern Regior	า
Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds	Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds
1	64.7	35.3	n/a	1	62.7	37.3	n/a
2	51.8	38.0	10.2	2	50.0	37.1	12.9
-	Southeast	ern Regior	า	;	Southwest	ern Regioi	n
Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds	Tags	None	1 Bird	2 Birds
1	55.4	44.6	n/a	1	64.7	35.3	n/a
2	52.3	38.6	9.1	2	51.8	37.0	11.3

All Regions										
Tags None 1 Bird 2 B										
1	63.9	36.1	n/a							
2	52.7	36.4	10.9							

What time did you harvest your turkey(s)? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Sunrise-9am	64.7	59.4	61.2	62.0	61.5	60.3	61.3
9am-Noon	17.7	22.4	17.9	21.5	22.4	22.6	20.9
Noon-3pm	8.8	10.6	13.2	9.2	10.6	10.9	10.7
3pm-5pm	8.8	7.7	7.4	7.4	5.0	6.3	7.0

13. Did you hunt on: (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Public Land	26.8	9.5	9.0	4.3	8.9	4.9	9.0
Your Own Land	15.4	28.1	24.2	25.3	19.1	21.0	22.7
Other Private Land	34.0	46.0	50.9	56.8	60.0	66.2	54.4
Both Public and Private Land	23.8	16.4	15.9	13.7	12.1	7.9	13.9

- 14. Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each statement below, please check the response which best reflects your 2005 spring hunt. (Percent)
  - Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	9.1	7.6	7.3	6.7	10.8	7.9	7.9
Somewhat	16.4	10.9	14.2	13.3	12.0	11.8	13.0
Not Much	15.7	13.6	15.9	14.9	12.0	13.6	14.4
No, Not At All	58.8	68.0	62.7	65.2	65.3	66.7	64.7

• There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	6.7	3.9	3.4	3.6	5.4	4.3	4.3
Somewhat	10.6	11.7	14.1	13.5	13.2	11.3	12.5
Not Much	27.4	18.1	23.2	20.2	17.6	19.6	20.9
No, Not At All	55.3	66.4	59.3	62.7	63.9	64.8	62.3

Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Definitely Yes	4.1	4.4	4.9	3.5	6.3	4.8	4.6
Somewhat	7.7	7.2	8.4	8.2	8.4	7.2	7.9
Not Much	19.2	15.0	16.6	14.9	11.6	16.0	15.6
No, Not At All	69.0	73.4	70.1	73.4	73.8	72.1	71.9

- 15. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:
- Tagged but not registered (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	3	4	12	14	4	7	44
2	1	5	3	8	4	6	27
3	3	4	7	4	2	1	21
≥ 4	9	4	5	6	3	7	34

Not tagged or registered (Frequency)

Number of Turkeys	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
1	4	10	15	16	7	10	62
2	2	4	9	5	2	4	26
3	2	2	1	1	0	1	7
≥ 4	4	2	3	5	1	2	17

16. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2005 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Very High	13.8	17.8	15.9	20.3	24.7	18.7	18.4
Fairly High	17.1	16.7	17.5	18.9	19.5	18.8	18.1
Average	40.1	38.0	39.7	36.8	35.8	38.8	38.3
Fairly Low	19.2	17.8	19.0	16.2	13.6	17.9	17.5
Very Low	9.8	9.6	8.0	7.8	6.6	5.8	7.7

17. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a "quality" spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and "7" having the least effect on your hunting experience. (Mean)

Factor	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
An Opportunity to kill a turkey	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.0	3.2	3.1
Seeing turkeys/calling birds in/hearing gobbling	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3
Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.1	3.8	4.2	4.1
Killing a mature Tom	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.7
Weather	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0
Not seeing other hunters	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.8
Spending time with friends and family	3.0	3.1	3.3	3.0	3.5	2.9	3.1

18. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zones(s) you hunted this spring? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Increased	13.5	13.2	19.0	22.5	22.9	13.4	17.3
Stay the same	37.1	48.2	42.9	47.1	44.2	48.9	45.4
Decreased	41.5	33.0	29.8	24.9	23.3	33.4	30.7
Did not hunt same zone	7.9	5.4	8.3	5.5	9.6	4.3	6.5

19. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (Percent)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Increased	21.4	26.0	29.7	32.1	37.9	22.6	27.9
Stay the same	71.7	68.9	65.3	63.4	59.4	71.9	67.0
Decreased	7.0	5.1	5.1	4.4	2.4	5.6	5.0

20. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, how would you rate the quality of the DNR's turkey management program? (Mean)

	С	EC	NE	NW	SE	SW	Total
Rating	6.8	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.5	7.3	7.2

State of Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources dnr.wi.gov

#### Wisconsin Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire

s. 23.09(2)(k), Wis. Stats. Form 2300-117 (R 4/05)

Dear Turkey Hunter:

We are surveying a sample of Wisconsin wild turkey hunting permit holders to obtain needed information for managing Wisconsin's turkeys and setting permit levels. Please take a few minutes to complete the attached voluntary questionnaire. Completion of this survey is voluntary. Your participation in this survey will help us continue to progress in restoring wild turkeys to Wisconsin and in providing Wisconsin hunters with a quality hunt. You should complete this questionnaire even if you did not hunt or harvest a turkey. Please note information on this form will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose.

When you have finished, reverse the flap on this questionnaire, tape the edge and mail. Using your stamp will save the Department funds needed for management, even though no postage is required to return the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

	rea Mezera ng Upland Ecologist	
1.	Did you apply with landowner preference for this spring's turkey hunt permit?	How many years of spring turkey hunting experience do you have? (Check ONE)     0-5    6-10    11-15    16+
3.	Did you hunt turkeys this spring?	Please list the zone and time period your carcass tag(s) were valid for this spring:      Zone: Period: Period: Period: (Note: See map and Seasonal Dates)
	Have you ever attended a turkey hunter education clinic sponsored  Yes No Who introduced you to turkey hunting?	by the Wisconsin DNR and/or the National Wild Turkey Federation?
	Parent Friend Sibling Self Other:	
	•	ERE AND RETURN THE QUESTIONNAIRE.
7.	How difficult was it for you to find a place to hunt in the spring of 2  Very easy  Somewhat easy	005? Somewhat difficult
8.	Please list the zone(s) and time period(s) and check all the days that you hunted for turkeys this spring. (If your tags were for one zone and time period, fill out one column only.)	Please fill in the <b>number</b> of turkeys you saw or heard while actively hunting. (If your tags were for one zone and time period, fill out one column only.)
2	Zone:	Zone: Period: Zone: Period: Gobblers/Jakes seen Gobblers/Jakes seen Gobblers/Jakes heard Hens seen Hens heard Hens heard

Figure 1. 2005 Spring Turkey Hunting Questionnaire.

10. Did you shoot at the first turkey which presented an opportunity?	11. Did you hit a turkey you were unable to retrieve?
☐ Yes ☐ No	Yes No If yes, how many?
If no, please tell us which of the following was the reason.	12. How many turkeys did you harvest this spring?
☐ Waiting for a better shot.	
Waiting for an adult gobbler. (Did not want to shoot a jake.)	What time did you harvest your turkey(s)?
Waiting for a larger bird.	Turkey #1: Sunrise-9 am 9 am-Noon Noon-3 pm 3 pm-5 pm
Wanted to hunt longer.	Turkey #2: Sunrise-9 am 9 am-Noon Noon-3 pm 3 pm-5 pm
Other (please describe)	Takey #2. Sumise y an Sym Sym Sym Sym Sym Sym
13. Did you hunt on:	
	Other Private land Both public and private land
<ol> <li>Other hunters may have affected your turkey hunt. For each stateme hunt.</li> </ol>	ent below, please check the response which best reflects your 2005 spring
	Definitely Yes Somewhat Not Much No, Not At All
Other hunters sometimes kept me from hunting where I wanted to.	
There was too much competition from other hunters where I hunted.	
Other hunters interfered with my chance to bag a bird.	
15. How many turkeys do you know of that were shot by people this spring and were:	16. Overall, how would you rate the quality of your spring 2005 Wisconsin wild turkey hunt this year? (Check ONE)
Tagged but not registered	
Not tagged or registered	☐ Very High ☐ About Average ☐ Fairly Low ☐ Fairly High ☐ Very Low
(Note: You will NOT be contacted about this.)	
17. Rate the factors that most influence your perception of a quality spring turkey hunt. Enter a value of 1 to 7 next to each statement, with "1" having the most effect and "7" having the least effect on your hunting experience.	18. Do you feel that the turkey numbers have changed from last year in the zone(s) you hunted this spring? (If your tags were for one zone, fill out one column only.)
An opportunity to kill a turkey	Zone:
Seeing turkeys/Calling birds in/hearing gobbling	
Killing a turkey (Tom, Jake or bearded hen)	☐ Increased ☐ Increased
Killing a mature Tom	☐ Stay the same ☐ Stay the same
Weather	Decreased Decreased
<ul><li>Not seeing other hunters</li><li>Spending time with friends and family</li></ul>	☐ Did not hunt ☐ Did not hunt same zone ☐ Same zone
19. Would you like to see the number of permits available for the zone(s) you hunted changed? (If your tags were for one zone, fill out one column only.)	On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the best and 1 being the worst, rate your overall satisfaction with spring turkey hunting in Wisconsin.
Zone: Zone:	Circle one:
☐ Increased ☐ Increased	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Stay the same Stay the same	1 2 3 4 3 0 7 8 9 10
Decreased Decreased	
Decreased	
Seasonal Dates:	
Period Dates	
A April 13-17 B April 20-24	
C April 27-May 1	
D May 4-8	
E May 11-15 F May 18-22	

Figure 1. Continued.



Figure 2. Turkey Regions.